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# Socialist Worker

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# THE BOSSES CAN BE BEATEN

Struggle is the key in 2023



Education workers defied Doug Ford's anti-union law and won.

**B**y 9:43 am on the first work day of the year the income of the average CEO will surpass the average worker's wage for the entire year.

While most of us struggle to pay for the basics, bosses are doing very nicely indeed.

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, CEOs of Canada's 100 biggest companies got a nice raise in 2021: an average of 23% more than 2020. The average boss took home \$9.13 million.

During the same year the average Canadian worker got less than a 3% raise, at a time when consumer price inflation is higher than 8% - that's a 5% pay cut in real money.

Capitalism means billions for the already rich and increasing hardship for the millions of workers who create the wealth.

And the ruling class isn't satisfied. They

want more and they are going to squeeze the workers and continue to destroy the planet so that they can get richer still. Mainstream economists are telling people to expect more price rises and a recession in 2023.

The response from political leaders in this country shows what side of the class divide they are on. On a federal level, they are increasing interest rates which will cause a deeper recession and will force working people to pay more for essentials.

The federal Conservatives are working to use the economic crisis to build their base. Pierre Poilievre says he will be the one to end the downward spiral that working people find themselves in. Yet his policies are designed to make the rich richer again.

The New Democrats, who should be the voice of a left opposition are a non-factor

since they decided to enter into a formal alliance with the ruling Liberals.

That means that all of the opposition to the crisis and to Trudeau is being funneled towards the far-right. There are plans for a new 'convoy' protest this year. Infighting among the organizers means we don't know yet if another protest of the same type will happen but even if it doesn't, the bigots at the centre of the previous event are organizing in the open.

They have decided recently to target trans people and drag events across the country. There have been dozens of solidarity rallies shutting down the haters but they remain a growing threat.

Provincial leaders are using the economic crisis and the pandemic to destroy public services like healthcare and education. Doug

Ford in Ontario is starving the hospitals and inducing a crisis while he privatizes services and provides lucrative contracts to his friends.

But the fightback is also growing. Across the globe workers are organizing. Strikes are widespread across the UK and are forcing a political crisis.

Unionization drives in the US and Canada are pushing back against the bosses. In 2022, huge strikes, from construction workers to education workers have erupted in Canada.

Education workers in Ontario showed us that if you stand together you can defeat a draconian anti-union law and showed us that a mass workers' strike can provide a pole of attraction for the millions who are struggling to survive and can broaden the horizons for those who want to find a way to fight back.



# Sovereignty scam an attack on public sector and Indigenous rights

**A**lberta's rogue UCP premier, Danielle Smith has long claimed to be a person of "mixed race ancestry". She continues to claim that a great, great grandmother, Mary Crow, was Cherokee. Moreover, she claims her ancestor was a victim of the expulsion of the Cherokee and Creek nations, known as the "Trail of Tears".

Indigenous and non-Indigenous investigators have long debunked the story. Smith does have ancestors who came from the Oklahoma area, including a Maria Crowe, but her marriage records state she was white, and her birth date is from the 1870s, almost 50 years after the Trail of Tears.

Many on the right make similar claims, usually citing "Cherokee" ancestry. Perhaps that is because the Cherokee were known as one of the "civilized tribes". Convoy conspirator and white supremacist Tamara Lich has claimed Metis heritage, without evidence. There is a word Indigenous activists use to expose these dubious claims: pretendian.

Whenever Smith is caught making a bigoted statement – not an unusual occurrence – she whips out her "mixed-race heritage" claim like a get-out-of-jail-free card. She did it when she claimed anti-vaxxers faced worse discrimination than racism, anti-Semitism or homophobia. Similarly, Lich deflected evidence that last winter's convoy occupation was guided by white supremacists with her bogus "Metis" claim.

All this would almost be comical if it wasn't a common ploy of the far right to disguise racist intent. In the past, Alberta Indigenous leaders laughed when asked to comment on Smith's claim.

But now that the "Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act" has been hastily rubber stamped by her UCP majority the method behind her specious cultural claim is exposed. It became explicit

when she recently declared:

"The way I've described it to the chiefs I have spoken with is that they have fought a battle over the last number of years to get sovereignty respected and to extract themselves from the paternalistic Indian Act. We get treated the exact same way from Ottawa."

Indigenous leaders are no longer laughing. They know that the "Sovereignty" laws are not just aimed at Ottawa, but also at Indigenous treaty rights negotiated

declared. "And we're about to the point where we're going to start blockading."

## "Big government"

These assertions of provincial power where they did not previously exist are a threat to Indigenous autonomy, and we wholeheartedly support any and all means of resistance that may emerge in 2023.

But Indigenous control of their territories is just one target of the "sovereignty" strategy. Nor is it

a price tag is evil, an affront to the holy "free market" of capitalism.

Health? Education? Clean water? If you can't afford to buy it you don't deserve to have it.

In line with this is a vision of "human nature" rooted in social Darwinism. We are all greedy brutes, caring for no-one beyond our blood relations. Giving people democratic rights was a big mistake, and those who have exhibited their superiority by rising to the top and amassing the biggest heaps of

solidarity, our unions. If workers stand up for their rights, all Smith needs to do is declare their struggle an affront to sovereign provincial interests.

When Trudeau announced that Canada would entirely phase out internal combustion vehicles by 2035, Danielle Smith raced to the mic to declare that Alberta would use its "sovereignty" to build its own gas-guzzlers. It doesn't matter that the idea is completely whacky and impractical – it is about denying Ottawa's power to interfere with the holy "free market".

## Unity?

Most observers are discussing the "sovereignty" stuff as a threat to national "unity". They argue that these laws are unconstitutional (they likely are) and fan the danger of "separatism".

Let's be clear, as socialists we have no brief with "Canadian sovereignty", any more than the provincial brand. Canada is an historical, legal fiction, a cobbling together of disparate regions simply to make it easier to administer by a distant colonial headquarters. We owe a debt to Indigenous activists for ripping the mask from this illegitimate colonial structure.

That said, we need to fight tooth and nail to defend those aspects of "big government" that serve us, things like universal public healthcare, public education, publicly funded libraries, health and safety regulations, environmental laws and more. These services were never gifts from the government, they are reforms that were fought for by mass democratic movements, led by our unions.

And we need to organize to defend our democracy itself – this is the ultimate target of slimy attacks like these so-called "sovereignty". This begins by recognizing that they are designed and intended to give sovereignty to the "free market" – to unbridled capitalism.



Chiefs from Treaty, 6, 7, and 8 lands gather to denounce the Alberta sovereignty act

with "the Crown" (now the federal government). They have promised a range of actions, from legal challenges to the Sovereignty Act to civil disobedience.

Next door, in Saskatchewan, Scott Moe's far-right government looks on with envy.

They have tabled their own "Saskatchewan First" act. There too Indigenous leaders flat out reject the idea:

"We have mandates from the chiefs in assembly to move forward legally [and] politically," Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Chief Bobby Cameron

really about opposing the so-called progressive agenda of Ottawa and the Trudeau Liberal government. The right-wing in Alberta has long used "Ottawa" as a bogeyman to grab votes, conveniently ignoring the billions in handouts that Trudeau *et al* have funneled to the oil and gas industry.

What these "sovereignty" power grabs are really about is the ability to dismantle "Big Government". Danielle Smith's UCP and Scott Moe's Saskatchewan Party are chock full of libertarian true believers, people who truly believe that delivering public services without

stuff – the "meritocracy" – should have the right to call the shots.

So while these governments are moving quickly to dismantle public healthcare, break public education, environmental protection and more, there is one facet of "Big Government" they actively support – armed force. Witness Smith moving to create an Alberta police force, a "body of armed men" with greater loyalty to Edmonton than to Ottawa. It doesn't matter that this would waste billions of dollars to achieve, it is about power.

Achieving that power requires dismantling our organizations of

## Toronto is throwing billions into a hole in the ground

**A** new report says that a long-overdue transit line is also more than a \$1 billion over budget (now almost \$13 billion and counting). Despite two years of delays, the report says the project has "no credible plan" for opening.

The Eglinton LRT was envisioned to be part of a network of above-ground rapid transit lines that would revolutionize public transportation and relieve traffic congestion.

On the day he took office as mayor, Rob Ford scrapped the project, and "redesigned" the Eglinton line as a partial subway. At the same time he took construction, and the future of transit in the GTA, out of public hands and gifted it to

corporations. They called it a "public/private partnership (P3)" but it was privatization by stealth.

The erosion of public service has been compounded by Ford's successor, John "Mr. Rogers" Tory.

It was accomplished with the connivance of the Ontario's transit agency Metrolinx, which in turn handed construction of the Eglinton line to Crosslinx Transit Solutions (CTS). This is a consortium of some of the country's biggest construction and engineering corporations: Ellis Don, Aecon, SNC Lavalin, the IBI Group and financial partner ScotiaBank. There are 28 companies involved in CTS – that is a lot of forks in the pie.

Meanwhile, people living and working along the Eglinton

corridor have been suffering in construction zone hell for over a decade.

## Thieves fall out

As cost overruns and delays pile up, the Metrolinx/Crosslinx alliance is breaking down into finger pointing and potential legal action.

Crosslinx is demanding more money and time to finish the project. Metrolinx says that some of the work Crosslinx claims to have completed is not up to standards, and could constitute health and safety dangers for transit riders. They point to tunnel seepage and mould, and unsafe curves. Testing of completed track has revealed many failures. They call this "ongoing underperformance".

CTS has issued more than \$250 million in unpaid claims to Metrolinx, and as a result refuses to commit to a revised timeline or



budget.

By the way, profits for all the major CTS players are looking very rosy. SNC-Lavalin's most recent quarterly report shows revenue up

over 8%. Aecon's revenue in 2021 was \$71.8 billion. And Scotiabank posted a profit of \$10,174 million (banks are very shy about using the "b" word).

These are large corporations with multiple projects and investments, so it is hard to say specifically how much they are raking in from the Eglinton project, but you can count on 3 things: 1) It is a lot; 2) It isn't enough for them; and 3) Ontario and Toronto taxpayers are picking up the tab.

And if the Eglinton line is ever completed, the corporate payday isn't over. The same P3 bandits are at work on 3 other subway megaprojects in the GTA.

So the news for Toronto commuters is bad, and bound to get worse.



# More police will only bring more violence to Vancouver

by: **Jeffrey Hogan**

**T**he Vancouver 2022 municipal election results are concerning for the future of public safety in the city.

We saw the election of right-wing ABC party mayor Ken Sim along with an ABC majority on city council. Leading up to the election Ken Sim and the ABC party ran a platform of fear-based rhetoric and poor bashing and called for more police. Their first priority is to fulfill their promise to hire 100 new police alongside 100 new nurses.

What services will they cut to pay for this? Where will the new police come from when recruiting is at an all time low? Great questions, but the bigger problem is how this will affect the vulnerable populations in Vancouver who already experience higher rates of police violence. More police will come at the expense of defunding community lead initiatives, like harm reduction for drug users, even when these strategies are proven to save lives. To give a general idea of what his policies would cost Ken Sim offered some projection during his campaign.

This could end up costing the city \$100 million over a five year period with no clear way forward on

how to generate this funding aside from pulling resources from other areas that already struggle with a limited budget.

## **Police won't solve mental health crises**

As a mental health worker in Vancouver, I spend time with clients who have interacted with police during a mental health crisis. Their reports make me skeptical about policing as a response to mental health issues. Mental health is a social issue and more police will only make problems worse. In fact, many people feel hesitant to call crisis lines (a crucial resource when reducing risk) in fear of negative interaction with police. If someone is already facing discrimination from police or had a violent, potentially traumatic encounter, getting police involved is no longer an option for them. This limits the options someone has for preventing their next crisis. This will likely reoccur if the root cause of the crisis is not addressed, something more police cannot solve.

If someone is suicidal calling the police is what clinicians are ethically trained to do once they have assessed risk and suicide is imminent. This can prevent the risk of suicide as the person is arrested and sent to a hospital for



Vancouver rallies against police brutality

treatment under the Mental Health Act of BC. However, as someone who has assessed risk of suicide/self-harm and worked with clients collaboratively, I've heard first hand how oppressive and traumatic interactions with the police can be. Cops can be more aggressive than necessary or prone to arrest when an arrest is not needed. The ability to arrest individuals based on the VPD's own observations leads to discrimination and abuse of power.

"Police officers are empowered under the Mental Health Act to apprehend people they believe are suffering from an apparent mental

disorder based on information they receive or on their own observations. Under the Mental Health Act, police officers can transport individuals to hospital for the purposes of an assessment by a physician. Physicians may certify the individual based on their assessment but certification is not guaranteed." -Mental Health Act of BC.

## **Defund**

To prevent traumatic arrests, further oppression, and discrimination we need to examine the rules, criteria and limits to the way police respond

to mental health calls. Police responding to someone they have no knowledge of leaves room for bias and their own personal judgement. When it comes to mental health, money needs to be diverted from police but with more funding to community based resources and organizations. This would allow us to create options other than calling the police. That would be a real increase in community safety.

Already we see that the way police interact is racialized, with more oppression and violence disproportionately directed to people of color, especially indigenous people in Canada. Police oppression is also used to protect class interests and is oppressive to people without homes living in the downtown east-side. This oppression is going to be exacerbated by responding to our mental health crisis in Vancouver with more policing.

We need a nuanced conversation around how to organize and protect community safety in the fallout of a pro-police city hall. Socialists envision a future in which police are defunded and there is a reinvestment of resources into community lead initiatives. Community safety begins with the community, not by a militarized arm of the state that puts class interest before the dignity of human lives.

## Quebec: Cops and racism, CAQ style

In October Quebec Superior Court judge Michael Yergeau ruled in favour of Christopher Luamba, who had launched a constitutional human rights challenge over police racial profiling.

In particular the ruling removed a section from the Quebec Highway Safety Code which allows cops to stop and search any vehicle even without cause. The clause was an open invitation to racial profiling.

Luamba charged he had been arbitrarily stopped and harassed by Montreal police over a dozen times, usually when he was driving. None of the stops even resulted in a ticket.

The court victory was supposed to send a wake-up call to racist police. Don't hold your breath. Francois Legault's CAQ government has launched an appeal.

They say ability to arbitrarily stop any vehicle – essentially nullifying Charter rights and freedoms – is "a very useful police tool" and that racial profiling is a separate issue. They promise to spend more money on sensitivity training for cops instead. That has worked so well in the past.

Left opposition party

Quebec Solidaire called out the government's overt racism. Andrés Fontecilla, QS MNA and critic for anti-racism declared: "It's a huge slap in the face for all racialized people, in particular for the Black communities of Quebec. By maintaining article 636 that allows random stops by police without reasonable cause, the CAQ has admitted that racial profiling is acceptable in Quebec."

Moreover, they argue that the move is consistent with other racist CAQ policies designed to appeal to its rural base. "In the last few months, François Legault has irresponsibly conflated immigration and violence. He has injured more than one with his declarations. The last thing Quebec needs right now is a government that takes actions that are detrimental to inclusion and national cohesion."



## John Tory - SuperMayor wants more cops

Toronto mayor John Tory is calling for a \$48 million increase to the Police. He cites inflation as reason for a substantial raise to the cops' \$1.1 billion annual budget.

Tory was recently conferred with "strong mayor" powers by his ally, Doug Ford. Among other things, this will allow the mayor to single-handedly: set the city budget; have veto power over city council in matters of "provincial priority"; appoint his political allies to head all committees and boards; hire political friends to head all levels of city bureaucracy including Chief Administrative Officer; and override bylaws that are not in sync with "provincial priority".

In short it is the death of municipal democracy, and the endgame of Ford's obsession with destroying Toronto's progressive political leanings, that began with arbitrarily cutting city council by half in 2021.

No wonder Tory thinks he needs more cops to back his autocratic rule.

Meanwhile, the TPS's own data has proved that Toronto cops are

twice as likely to use force against racialized communities than against whites. Cops were 1.5 more likely to pull their guns when dealing with non-white suspects.

The rise in police violence is a national trend. In 2022, police shootings increased almost 25% over the previous year. 87 people were shot by cops, 46 of them were killed. These



numbers include disproportionately large numbers of Indigenous people and racialized suspects.

Increasing police budgets at a time when the city is already running a deficit, due to cut in support from the

provincial and federal governments, can only result in further destruction of public services, health (including mental health), housing and transportation.

The disgraceful collusion between police and the rising far-right in this country, exposed by the "Convoy" occupation of Ottawa in February 2021, is a real threat to everyone.

Instead of automatically giving the cops more power and money, it is time to recognize that they are beyond tinkering and constantly promised "reform". It is time to defund the police.



# F\*ck the syste

## Why you should join the socialists in 2023

*Student, trade union and anti-racist activist Rohit Revi recently spoke in Toronto to an International Socialists forum about why we need to overthrow capitalism for the sake of both people and the planet. Below is a transcript of his presentation.*

by: **Rohit Revi**

**W**e begin by naming the system. In much of public discourse, the system of political economy that runs the world is nameless. We have to name the system as capitalism, and be deliberate in doing so. We must do this in our workplaces, in our schools, in our universities, and in union education spaces.

There are many, but here are three reasons to say fuck the system, fuck capitalism, and show why socialism provides an alternative.

### **Reason 1: We are worth much more.**

Capitalism has created a very unhappy world. According to the World Health Organization, more than 20% of the world's population suffers from mental illness as a debilitating condition. In 2019, more than 300 million people were affected by anxiety. Post pandemic, these numbers have only risen.

Blame capitalism. It makes a world in which we spend the majority of our time being inauthentic to ourselves. As workers, we are constantly in service of an authority at work who wields significant power over us. What a terrible world in which we rarely get to choose what we want to do with our lives, and end up in work we have no interest in or passion for. Whatever it we create during our working day, we have no rights over.

Marx calls this inauthentic state of being alienation. Under capitalism, we are alienated from what we create, we are alienated

from our own true nature, we are alienated from each other. We are trained to see each other as competitors in the labour market. And finally we are alienated from our species as part of the natural world – from our very planet.

This state of inauthenticity, of permanently living a second-hand life, is a brutal form of social incarceration that the capital-

es the basic principle of “from each according to ability and to each according to need”, expressed in the Manifesto. Capitalism says you are free to work to make someone else rich, or to starve.

As a species, we received a rich and flourishing planet that has everything for everyone, and no one should have to burn out working and living paycheque to paycheque

tating floods in Pakistan, rising sea levels have begun to drown island nations like Tuvalu, once-perennial rivers are now drying up, and wildfires are rampant across continents. How did we end up here?

Yet again, we have to name the system that creates this planetary misery. Capitalism. Capitalist economics is built on extraction of value – and according to Marx,

which are always lower than the value of the labour itself, so that surplus value can be extracted.

Once thought of as infinite in its resources, it has only taken capitalism a few hundred years to disrupt natural cycles and produce mass extinctions: polluted water, unbreathable air in many parts of the world, rising food insecurity, and more. Capitalism is killing both people and the planet, both workers and nature. Fuck this system.

Capitalism's dependence on labour is also its fatal weakness, and is also why you should be a socialist. Our biggest strength is our ability to withhold our labour from the system that is ruining the planet, stop this exploitation for good. Labour is the vehicle through which capitalism exploits nature, and as workers we have the key to that vehicle and the power to shut it down.

Because capitalism is built on simultaneous exploitation of labour and nature, the liberation of labour and the liberation of nature are intertwined projects. The planet and the workers upon it have shared destinies.

Socialism ascribes a radically different function to labour in society, where labour is fulfilling and not extractive, and in coherence with the planet. It is about satisfying needs of all, not producing surplus value for a few. This will bring forth radically different relationships to nature. There is an urgent need to disrupt business-as-usual under capitalism and rediscover our relationships to the planet, guided by Indigenous ways of knowing that have stewarded our planet and its resources for generations.



ist economy has locked us in. Meanwhile, the level of affluence, comfort and choices that the rich have under capitalism is unpardonable. Fuck that. We deserve better. We are worth much more.

Socialism – a world in which workers control the means of production, where workers own what we create and the value that it brings – is opposite to Capitalism in this regard. Socialism emphasizes

in a state of permanent inauthenticity. It's a no-brainer on why you should be socialist. We are worth much more. So fuck the system, be a socialist.

### **Reason 2: Our planet is dying, and the wrong Amazon is burning.**

The disastrous effects of climate change are not a thing of the future – we see them today. Devastating

value in society is typically found in two places. One is, nature – the bounty of resources from oceans to mountains and deserts – that provides for us; and the other is labour – the ability of human beings to shape those resources to meet our needs

Capitalism is a systematic profit-driven extraction of value from nature and labour. What is given in exchange for labour are wages,





### Reason 3: It's either 'Socialism or Barbarism'

This slogan used by Rosa Luxemburg during the First World War, is as tailored for our times as it was for hers. We don't have to look far to find our rulers exercising barbarous policies.

Our power to paralyze the system and transform it can only be exercised collectively. Capitalism defends itself by dividing workers. It tries to split us through racism, through nation-state identities and immigration statuses, through nationalism and xenophobia, through religious bigotry, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, through

segments of the working class have historically made such deals with the ruling classes.

This happened with the gendered division of labour, and the normalization of misogyny and sexism in society, where male workers identified with a male ruling class and not with their women comrades.

It happened during the period of transatlantic slavery, with the creation of the idea of "Whiteness" and anti-Black racism, which brought white workers closer to the ruling class than to their Black comrades.

We also have seen that wherever that consensus is broken and

solidarities are forged, the system is forced to change for the better, if only temporarily or partially. Capitalism is built on undermining our collective power. A socialist project with the leadership of women, queer, Black, Indigenous

people will change this world for good.

We can't talk about "Socialism or Barbarism" without talking about fascism. Especially during periods of economic crisis, the latent diseases of capitalism (racism, sexism, and all forms of oppression) explode in unspeakable violence.

Fascism is a class project of the

petite bourgeois, it is a project that sustains the logic of capitalism and tries to create a new ruling order that breaks free of any minor reforms and concessions that capitalism might have struck with workers – like voting rights, nominal equality before law etc.

Since the 2008 market crisis we are witnessing a rise in fascistic tendencies world-wide: Modi in India, Rajapaksha in Sri Lanka, Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil. Whether or not Bolsonaro or Trump got kicked out of office is a minor concern here, the fascistic spirit that brought them to power is well and alive in our times.

The "freedom convoy" and their unabashed use of Nazi symbolism is just a closer to home example.

The antidote is to break the power capitalist oppression and exploitation hold over us, break the divisions. Without our labour it will crumble. Fuck this system – be a socialist.

Today we are at a fork in the road. One path leads to a barbaric future – where people are psychologically and socially unwell and unfulfilled, where our planet is collapsing under the weight of our greed, where there is an ever increasing growth of brutalities and oppression against persecuted minorities and Indigenous people of all lands.

The only other path before us is a socialist one – where we build workers' power by organizing ourselves, learn from both the victories and failures of our past, build the infrastructure to use our collective power to shut this system down.

That is what it means to be a socialist and that is what it takes to fuck the system.



patriarchy, transphobia and non-binary exclusion, and through homophobia and queerphobia.

These divisions are inherent to the system, because they are built on property relations. From feudalism to capitalism, the ruling classes have tried to strike consensus with a segment of the working class population with the aim of keeping us divided. Sadly



## Make 2023 a year of resistance

by: Carolyn Egan

As we start a new year, workers and activists are looking back at 2022 inspired by the uprisings in Sri Lanka, Iran, and Sudan. There is a sense of optimism as fight backs in the UK and other areas continue, workers taking on the rising cost of living, and the ongoing attacks of the ruling class. Indigenous struggles are leading the climate justice movement in this country, taking on the oil companies and the federal government.

### Far-right

But we are also seeing the rise of the far right globally which showed its ugly face in the 'Freedom Convoy' which laid siege to the city of Ottawa for weeks. These forces are continuing to organize. We are facing economic and climate crises which are creating tremendous anxiety, alienation, and fear of what the future may bring. Many are being drawn to the simplistic solutions that the leaders of these movements are putting forward. People are disappointed by the lack of fighting strategies by the trade union leadership and feel that their voices are not being heard. They are struggling to make ends meet and blame Trudeau and the Liberal government, and see the New Democratic Party supporting it. The only voices many of them hear are from the right and the far right with their lies and misinformation, scapegoating and building divisions.

The best way to fight the attacks and the economic hardships that so many are facing---the skyrocketing food prices, the huge raises in rent, the inability to buy a home, the privatization of health care, is through strong worker struggles and broad movements on the ground which represent the exploited and the oppressed. Allow those being drawn to the right to see that it is the left that is mobilizing against Trudeau, Ford and other regressive governments and corporations.

If we look at recent struggles we can see that sections of workers here are also on the move, feeling their own strength when they act collectively.

### Strike back!

A number of months ago tens of thousands of building trade members in Ontario went out across the province, shutting down hundreds of worksites for three weeks. These workers were hailed as leading the fight against the rising cost of

living when number of local unions turned down tentative agreements negotiated by their leadership. The wage increases were less than they deserved. They stayed out longer, gaining strong community support and won significant gains.

More recently 55,000 Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) education workers defied an imposed contract and anti-strike legislation by walking out of their work places, courageously standing up against \$4000 a day fines on each individual striker. The bullying tactics imposed by the anti-worker Tory government backfired. The stand by the strikers, strong solidarity by parents, students and other unions, and the calling of a general strike forced the government to eat humble pie and back down, rescinding the legislation. This brought incredible confidence to so many proving that collective actions can win.

There are other examples of workers on the move. The victory



by Amazon employees in Staten Island sparked union drives across Canada in Nisku, Alberta, Montreal, and in Ontario at 'fulfillment centres' in Milton, Cambridge, London and Kitchener. We have seen successful organizing at Starbucks in the US and Canada. The big three auto manufacturers are going into bargaining in the US as is UPS which potentially could be huge battles. We saw the anger at the leadership in the rail workers struggle south of the border.

Fight backs against the privatization of health care by both unions and communities across the country are growing. In Ontario a broad based movement of environmentalists, local residents, housing advocates, unions and First Nations is taking on the provincial government opening up protected, environmentally sensitive land to help out their developer friends make huge profits.

These are battles between the robbers and the robbed and they are gaining support. Though we have no crystal ball, it gives hope for a year of ongoing struggle.



# John Molyneux, a revolutionary life (1948-2022)

by: **Carolyn Egan and Michelle Robidoux**

It was a great shock to learn of the sudden passing of John Molyneux on December 10th. John was a lifelong revolutionary who radicalized in the context of the great movements of the 1960s, and throughout the years he always projected his confidence in the revolutionary potential of the working class and in the explanatory power of Marxist ideas.

Socialists around the world, including in Canada, have drawn inspiration from his writings including *Marxism and the Party*, *Arguments for Revolutionary Socialism*, *What is the real Marxist tradition* and many others. But his activity was no less inspiring, and the two were closely bound together.

John had a remarkable energy, working on many different fronts at any given time. He was genuinely interested and curious about emerging new struggles, not in an abstract or detached way, but with a fusion of theoretical and practical concerns. He followed developments around the world with a sharp eye, allowing himself to be inspired while not shying away from raising sometimes difficult questions and disagreements.

John's legacy as a revolutionary can be seen in the numerous tributes from his many comrades and friends around the world, and we cannot do justice to it here. But his

single-minded focus on the need for socialists to bend every effort to build revolutionary organization stands out to us as one of the

most powerful and enduring.

In his important book *Marxism and the Party*, he wrote: "...running through



everything that the party is and does, the thread connecting all its key characteristics and tasks is the striving to unite theory and practice. The party exists to translate the general aims of socialism into concrete practical activities and to link every immediate struggle to the ultimate aim of socialism. Through the party, theory – the materialist interpretation of history, the analysis of capitalism and its contradictions and the understanding of the historical role of the working class – informs practice, and through the party, practice – the struggle to change the world – stimulates, directs, tests and ultimately realises theory."

John gave every fibre of his being to the revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism, to working class self-emancipation, to international socialism – right to the very end of his life. Days before he died, he was part of organizing an anti-fascist protest in Dublin, and was interviewed in local media.

His example and legacy live on in the activity of the many individuals and organizations he collaborated and polemicized with around the world. Our condolences to his partner Mary Smith, his children, and comrades in Ireland, the United Kingdom and around the world.

Rest in power, John Molyneux. La lutte continue.

# TRANS RIGHTS NOW!



Upcoming event:

## The far-right and Trans Rights

**Sunday, January 15**

1:00 pm EST, 10:00 am PST  
Trinity St Paul's centre 427 Bloor St  
west Toronto and on zoom

Speaker: Alex Adams

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Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs.

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# Stop the deportation of climate activist Zain Haq!

by: **Bradley Hughes**

**Z**ain Haq is a tireless climate activist based in Vancouver, BC. Climate emergencies are occurring with greater severity and frequency - we all need to do whatever we can to get a just transition. Zain's commitment to peaceful civil disobedience has resulted in his being arrested multiple times. Unfortunately for Zain, and all the rest of us who will face the devastation of the next climate emergencies, the Federal government wants to use the fact that Zain is here on a student visa to remove him and his political activism from the country. Zain told Socialist.ca, "I hope this society has the wisdom to not shoot the messenger. Our society as a collective needs to show solidarity with one another when people are faced with the kind of prosecution and/or persecution for telling the truth. Sooner or later, this prosecution will spread to most of society, one step at a time, not just a few of us who are facing the brunt of it now."

## Police and prosecutor

In June, the climate group Zain helped found, Save Old Growth, restarted its actions blocking the trans-Canada highway. That same day Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) started knocking on doors in Zain's neighbourhood demanding to know where he was and informing his neighbours that he was a "national security risk." When Zain returned home and found out, he turned himself in to the CBSA as soon as he had legal counsel. CBSA imprisoned him for two days. Unlike the rest of the

justice system CBSA acts both as police and prosecutors. When they went before a judge to ask to keep Zain in custody, the CBSA was also the prosecutor. CBSA wanted to keep Zain in detention until they could get an order for his removal. Failing that, they demanded that the judge remove Zain's charter rights and impose conditions on Zain's release that he not be allowed to participate in legal demonstrations or speak about civil disobedience. The judge did not impose those conditions.

In August, Save Old Growth organized a march in Vancouver along with Hereditary Chiefs of Wet'suwet'en. Zain checked with the Vancouver Police a few days before the march to see if his participation would violate the release conditions imposed on him by them. The VPD assured him his attendance did not violate those conditions. Two weeks after the rally, the VDP appeared on Zain's doorstep and arrested him just before the long weekend. After the weekend, the Crown Prosecutor was on vacation, and no one else from their office would make themselves available for the bail hearing. As a result, Zain

spent eight days in prison.

Then CBSA arrested him and kept him in detention for four more days. And again acting as police and prosecutor they asked the judge for indefinite detention or a ban from all political activism. Again, they were denied.



## Barred from university and work

However, they have removed Zain's work and study permit and told him to leave the country. They can not give him the required 30 days notice and then forcibly remove him, because Zain is still going through the court process due to his arrests for climate activism. His sentencing hearing is on February 9.

Zain's fate now lies in the hands of the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees, Sean Fraser. Zain is applying to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. It is up to the Minister to grant or deny Zain's application.

## Injustices and double standards

There are several injustices here. While climate activists like Zain are sent to jail, the

climate criminals in the oil and gas companies, the banks that finance them and the governments who subsidize them are all walking free.

There is also shameful double standard when it comes to people in Canada who are not citizens or permanent residents. They must fear that if they step out of line they can be deported away from their work, studies and/or family. And this punishment isn't part of the criminal law system, it's meted out by CBSA agents without due process.

If Zain is deported it sends a clear message to every international student and those on work permits, you can't participate in political dissent unless you are willing to risk being deported. And of course, CBSA and the police have been so heavy-handed with Zain because his dissent threatens the billions in profits made from resource extraction.

Don't let them deport Zain Haq!

## Take action:

Zain needs your support. There is an online letter to the Prime Minister and Immigration Minister that you can sign, and a GoFundMe page to help with his legal expenses. Please go to [Socialist.ca/Zain](https://socialist.ca/Zain) for the links to those pages.

Contact your MP and ask them to request the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees grant Zain's appeal to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

If you want to get involved in the campaign to stop the deportation email the Vancouver branch of the IS and we'll forward your email to Zain: [VancouverIS@socialist.ca](mailto:VancouverIS@socialist.ca)

# Migrant Students in Canada: An organizing force to be reckoned with

by: **Perna Subramanian**

**I**n the past few weeks, the education sector in Ontario has been witnessing a gamut of capitalist reactions to the organizing power of workers in the province. Simultaneously, then, it has also witnessed the solidarity of different workers coming together to preserve the right to protest and organize for affordable and dignified living. As an international student-worker, the fight for education sector workers to be empowered is very much resonant with the plight and conditions of migrant-student-workers.

As student-workers who have witnessed tuition hikes, dangerous working circumstances as "essential" workers in the pandemic and a 7% inflation rate, migrant-students understand the vagaries of the increasing privatization of education and its effects on education workers. Migrant students, much like education workers themselves, have never been able to separate a learning environment from a working environment—we are poised as both students and workers to understand that any educational institution is also a workplace. Moreover, migrant students particularly work both on campus and off campus—we are your grocery packers, shoppers, Uber drivers, restaurant line cooks, care workers and cleaners. We thus understand that it costs to get educated and to educate.

However, working as students has always been much more of an uphill task for migrant students—we are legally allowed to work only 20 hours off campus. This unfair restriction on our permits is advertised to us as a goodwill act done to secure more learning hours as students. But, this idealistic denominator is

precisely that—far removed from the material, everyday conditions of working lives of students. Take for example, one can simply start with this question to see the unfairness of this restriction: how can most available part-time jobs be strictly 20 hours if we take into account an average 8 hour work week for 3 days?

Students are thus automatically forced into exploitative workplaces precisely because of the threat of "illegal" working hours looming over our heads. Jobandeep Singh Sandhu, a fellow migrant-student worker, was deported for the reasons of not being able to stick to this restriction, in 2019. Many international students who are unable to work enough to get paid enough, are continually reported to resort to food banks, exploitative work conditions and dangerous living conditions. This is all because of the unfair limits on how we can support ourselves and our dear ones.

But none of these injustices go unfought for. Migrant Students United, a chapter of Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, started organizing around the

removal of this restriction with a petition to keep Jobandeep inside Canada, which eventually turned into a larger campaign about a full-fairness agenda for international students. One of the recent wins of migrant student organizing has been the partial removal of the 20 hour work limit up until December of 2023. While some may see this as just a bandaid response to labour shortage, migrant student-workers see this as both a revelatory sign and an even more telling opportunity. This victory is a sign of how this restriction was always removable regardless of the present motivations of the government. And second, this partial win is an opportunity for us to fight for the permanent removal of this unfair, unjust and exploitable restriction. The removal of such arbitrary working restrictions empowers the migrant workers, gives them more room to make decisions that support their working

lives best, and opens more opportunities for them to be able to survive the realities of being a student in Canada.

Currently, migrant students are organizing against the unfair costs to be borne within the

education sector. While Migrant Students United is working towards the demand of a complete, permanent removal of the work restriction over other fairness demands, Ontario College Student Associations has launched the #NeedorGreed Campaign, asking for a complete tuition freeze and tuition parity for international students. We, as socialists, must continue to see how treating international students as cash cows is tied to austerity measures of the government, signified through massive education budget cuts. Increasing corporatization of education is thus producing a series of antagonisms: of the interests of the domestic elite and the needs of (disproportionately) racialised migrant student-workers, of the underpaid education worker and the exploited migrant student and so on.

We need to continue to organize around these contradictions as critical points of solidarity. This is already being demonstrated by educators and migrant students coming together to fight for each other's rights. While we continue to stand in solidarity with bargaining educators fighting for fair contract, we have also received unparalleled support from educators for undocumented and low-waged migrants to be granted permanent status in Canada.

Thus, without going into despair, we need to continue to see how profit-motivated designs may invite racialised migrant workers into an exploitative "Canadian" dream as mere revenue generating numbers. But, the economic interests of the capitalists cannot calculate how living, breathing workers are challenging the unfair terms of this dream for securing better, more just futures.

And we are just getting started.





## Warehouse workers are fighting back

**M**embers from UNIFOR Local 1285 went out on strike against global logistics giant Keuhne+Nagle in early December, at the company's warehouse on Hogan Avenue in North-West Mississauga.

Workers were fighting to stop the erosion of their wages through inflation and were demanding, like so many other strikes lately, wage increases to keep pace with the cost of living.

The new tentative agreement means an immediate 12% increase for the lowest waged workers, a \$1,100 signing bonus, improved benefits, increased sick days and overtime wage increases among other gains.

Workers ensured vital medical supplies and equipment were warehoused for companies like Accu-check, Ensure and Steri-strip throughout the pandemic. The company by the end of 2021 had revenues of over \$47 billion and profits in their North American operations rose more than 50%.

Picket lines remained strong despite attempts by the company to bring in scabs and



trucks. The workers turned back the trucks and stopped goods from leaving. They were joined by UNIFOR members from other workplaces and locals in the GTA who supported the picket lines.

As is too often the case these days the employer reaped huge profits throughout COVID but refused to raise wages or improve conditions for workers who created those profits.

This victory is important not just for the

workers on the line, but to ensure that other workers keep feeling confident to challenge employers who refuse to keep wages up with inflation. Each picket line victory builds the confidence of workers to fight back.

The Keuhne+Nagle strike is just the latest fightback among warehouse and logistics workers. In the summer, hundreds of members of the RBC e-Commerce warehouse in Scarborough struck and won improvements

in wages and benefits. The central role these workers play is giving them a huge amount of power.

### Amazon Organizing

In Montreal, a new group called the Amazon workers committee which brings together former and current Amazon workers, with support of Immigrant Workers Centre has formed in recent months. The goal is to organize some of the most viscerally exploited workers in the sector.

Amazon has a horrible track record and the abuses faced by workers from forced overtime to low wages have become notorious.

They are the centre of one of the biggest global retail empires run by one of the richest men in the world.

But capitalism creates its own gravediggers. Amazon workers are organizing and striking around the globe from the victorious union drive in New York to the recent wildcat strikes in the UK. They deserve our support and solidarity.

Workers of the world unite!

## Save public healthcare: Stop Ford!

*"That's the standard technique of privatization: defund, make sure things don't work, people get angry, you hand it over to private capital." — Noam Chomsky.*

**C**homsky's quote encapsulates the method that premier Doug Ford is using to privatize healthcare and education in Ontario. He is cutting core funding, forcing real wage cuts on healthcare workers and withholding needed emergency funding, despite sitting on almost \$3 billion in surplus cash.

The reality is, Ford and the Tories don't want to fix the public system at all. They want it to fall apart so that they can justify privatized services which will erode the public system and result in for-profit healthcare like we see in the US.

He is not the first Premier to do so. Over the years successive Liberal, Tory and NDP governments have underfunded the system. What is different now is that the COVID crisis provides Ford - and Premiers across Canada - with a cover for their plans. The crisis in the system can be blamed on external factors rather than deliberate policy decisions.

This is the most unprecedented attack on the public system that we have seen.

The main beneficiaries of Ford's plan are the corporate health groups that will make billions as they take over certain services. Healthcare and education are coveted by corporations because they are necessities. People will pay exorbitant fees for care if they are either dying or watching someone die. As well, the subsidies paid by taxpayer cash are a profit guarantee. It is the goose that lays the golden egg and the corporations want it all to themselves.

### How did we get here?

Healthcare was not gifted to us by a benevolent federal government but came about because of a decades-long fight. The first publicly funded

plan was introduced by Tommy Douglass in Saskatchewan but it would not have become the law of the land without a struggle. Trade unions, community members and healthcare workers organized and marched in their thousands to win a public system.

From the first moment of implementation there has been pressure from corporate interests to defund certain services. It was pressure from the rich that scuttled plans for universal dental care and pharmaceuticals. Those lobby efforts continue today.

Under Ford this has reached a new level. His cuts have been systematic and are designed to create a crisis in the system. Bill 124, which capped salary increases for all public sector workers at 1% has led to staffing shortages. Given levels of inflation, these salaries are not keeping up and are forcing people out of the healthcare professions.

He is also using public funds to subsidize services being carried out by private corporations. He and health minister, Sylvia Jones insist that people will only need their health cards to get care but what he fails to

mention is that the services are still privatized and public money is still being given to the private sector. The public system is still being eroded through these processes.

The announcement of \$20 million to run MRI labs in 27 small rural hospitals is another signal that Ford is courting private investment in key medical assets. The province, on the advice of McKinsey & Co., hopes to sell off the future income stream of OHIP payments to corporations willing to put up the private capital needed to buy the MRI machines and run the labs. While it appears to be a win for people served locally it comes at a higher price than if the equipment is owned by the hospital. Corporations that make the \$5 million plus investment in an MRI are not doing this out of benevolence but because they are guaranteed to be paid the actual costs plus the added cost of a profit. Profit is generally rationalized as a reward for the risk taken, but in this case, there is no risk.

### Reforms and Capitalism

This process of underfunding and then shifting

services to the private sector is going on around the world. Under the policies of the neoliberal economic models, cuts to the public sector are demanded as a means to balance budgets. This remains a central preoccupation for the international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank which demand cuts to secure loans.

In most advanced capitalist states, the same process can be seen at work. In the UK, cuts to the NHS have resulted in a broken system and labour revolt among nurses being squeezed by the cost of living crisis.

This is not an aberration or just a product of neoliberal policies however, the entire drive of the capitalist system is to make profits for the rich at the expense of working people. And the profits that can be generated by selling off necessary services are enormous. The ruling class will not simply sit back and watch the opportunity for billions in profits go unclaimed.

This central drive is behind the cuts and the privatization processes we see. We will never finish this fight while the capitalist system remains in place.

### Working class

Increasingly people are realizing that we cannot reform a rotten system. But we are also seeing the alternatives on display. The recent fight by education workers in Ontario against bill 28 is a case in point. The workers defied a forced contract and back to work legislation by striking in their tens of thousands. The power of the working class to shift the terrain and build a better world themselves can be seen in their fight. The struggle opened up new possibilities for a fightback.

The defeat of Ford on bill 28 has broadened the horizons of millions of people who want to fight. But we will only win this fight completely when we are rid of the capitalist system which pursues profit above the lives of working people.



Ontario nurses rally to stop Ford's cuts